

FIFTEENTH ABLOS BUSINESS MEETING
International Hydrographic Bureau, Monaco
14 / 15 October 2008

1. Welcome address

Captain Robert Ward, Director 2 of the International Hydrographic Bureau welcomed participants to the IHB on behalf of the Directing Committee of the Bureau and the staff. Mr. Steve Shipman as Secretary of ABLOS explained the arrangements for the meeting and in particular thanked Ms. Asano Usui for her help in preparing the documents.

2. Opening remarks by the Chairman

Mr Shin Tani, Chairman of ABLOS declared the meeting open at 09:32 on October 14. He thanked the IHB for hosting the meeting and also Mr. Steve Shipman and Ms. Asano Usui for their sterling efforts in preparing for the meeting.

3. Introduction of participants and apologies for absence

The Chairman invited the participants to introduce themselves. He welcomed and thanked Commander Muhammad Bashir from the Pakistan Hydrographic Office and Dr. Sunil Bisnath from York University who were attending their first ABLOS meeting as IHO and IAG representatives respectively along with Mr. Hariharan Pakshi Rajan the DOALOS ex officio representative. A list of participants who attended is appended at annex A to these minutes.

Apologies were noted from Mr. Graeme Blick who was unable to attend the meeting and from Prof. Chris Rizos who would not arrive until after the start of the meeting. Mr. Steve Shipman passed on apologies on behalf of Admiral Maratos who was unable to attend the ABLOS Business Meeting but sent his best wishes and said that he intended to be at the last day of the ABLOS conference when he returned back to the office after his current absence on duty.

4. Adoption of the Agenda

The Chairman stated that the provisional agenda had been circulated amongst the members and mentioned that whilst the absence of Admiral Maratos made Agenda item 1 technically incorrect he nevertheless proposed that the agenda as circulated be adopted. The Chairman said that he intended to defer the agenda item concerning the membership and the elections for Chair and Vice Chair until all members who were coming to the meeting had arrived.; a proposal which was accepted unanimously.

5. Appointment of a member who is responsible for the minutes.

The Chairman asked Mr. John Brown, an observer from the UK who would be present on both days and had undertaken the task at the previous ABLOS business meeting if he would be prepared to accept the responsibility again. Mr. Brown replied that he was more than willing to undertake this function if that met with the approval of the meeting. Approval was unanimous and John Brown was therefore tasked to be responsible for the minutes.

6. Approval of the minutes of the 14th Business Meeting

The Secretary stated that he had circulated the draft minutes of the meeting to the members and had received one or two minor amendments to the draft minutes which had been incorporated. There being no further suggested amendments the minutes were approved.

7. ABLOS the way forward

a. Revised ToR

The Secretary gave an update on proposed editorial changes to the ABLOS ToR which are made necessary in order to accurately reflect changes to the structure and organisation of the IHO which come into effect on 1 January 2009. Currently ABLOS reports to the IHO conference every 5 years with an annual report based on the business meeting minutes being sent to member states in the intervening years. Under the new arrangements, there will now be 2 main committees – one of which will be the Hydrographic Services and Standards Committee (HSSC) and the other will be the Inter-Regional Co-ordinating Committee (IRCC). The Chairman of ABLOS would report to the HSSC and not as was discussed last year the Inter Regional Co-ordinating Committee. The ToR would need revision to reflect the revised structure of the IHO in particular noting the change of name of the IHB to the IHO Secretariat when the protocol of amendments to the IHO Convention is ratified.

The Chairman remarked that in his view articles 2.4 and 2.13 did not require amendment as suggested in the draft and this was agreed. The acronym HSSC required explanation at its first usage in the document which the secretary agreed would be done. With the exception of those small amendments the proposed changes were approved.

The amended ToR will go to the HSSC for endorsement and thence to member states. A copy will be sent to the IAG with a covering letter explaining the rationale for the changes made necessary by the restructuring within the IHO.

b. Membership

Updates of the membership

The Secretary referred the delegates to Annex 4 (ABLOS15-7b-1 and 2) of the agenda which contained a list of the current members of ABLOS with dates of their terms of membership which was reviewed. Mr. Chris Carleton stated that the UK would like to nominate Mr. John Brown as an IHO Observer and would submit a letter of nomination to the IHB. Mr Shin Tani reported that Japan wished to extend his membership of ABLOS following completion of his period as Chairman. This was endorsed by ABLOS as it was considered that his experience and expertise had much to offer ABLOS. He also stated that Japan would like to nominate Prof. Kusunoki as an IHO Observer and would submit a letter to the IHB. The Chairman also said that he would like to nominate Mr. Ron Macnab as an ABLOS observer which met with unanimous approval. It was felt that there was sufficient scope within the ABLOS Conference Fund Guidelines at Annex 6 (ABLOS15-8a) to allow the ABLOS to pay expenses of the ABLOS observer where deemed appropriate by ABLOS.

Election of Chair and Vice Chair

The Chairman had deferred this important agenda item until all members of ABLOS were present on Wednesday, 15th and asked Dr. Zvonko Gržetić if he was willing to step up from Vice Chair to Chair. Dr. Gržetić replied that due to an anticipated job change within the next

six months or so he was unable to commit to that undertaking and therefore felt unable to progress to the office of Chairman as had been anticipated at the last Business Meeting. The current Chairman reminded delegates of section 2.6 of the ToRs which refer to the procedures involved with the posts of Chair and Vice Chair. He said that it should fall to the IAG to provide the Chair as it was by rights their turn and asked if there were any nominations from amongst the IAG members. Prof. Chris Rizos said that although he had previously been Chairman, he was willing to again undertake the duty for the next two years. There being no other candidates, Prof. Chris Rizos was duly appointed next Chairman of ABLOS.

Turning to the position of Vice Chair, the Chairman invited a similar nominee from amongst the IHO delegates present. Mr. Chris Carleton said that he too had previously been both Chair and Vice Chair but that he was willing to be the next Vice Chair if that met with approval. There being no other nominations, Mr. Chris Carleton was duly appointed next Vice Chair of ABLOS.

The Chairman asked Dr. Gržetić if the anticipated job change meant that his continued membership of ABLOS was unlikely. Dr. Gržetić replied that at this stage it was too early to be certain but that he would inform the Chairman by e-mail as soon as he was aware of the answer. The Secretary observed that in accordance with IHB CL 55/07 dated 18 June 2007, should there be another vacancy then Cdr. Luiz Torres would be the next IHO nominated representative.

c. TALOS Technical assistance.

As part of the internal IHO budgeting procedures all IHO committees were asked to look forward at work programmes as far as the year 2012. During the review it was noted by the IHO that the next ABLOS conferences were theoretically scheduled for 2009 and 2011, but this had been amended to 2010 and 2012 which brought the forecast into line with the amended schedule agreed at the last ABLOS business meeting in Dubrovnik.

As a result of the review ABLOS have been approached by the IHO to investigate the feasibility of setting up a standard structured training programme in Law of the Sea.

Chris Carleton in welcoming the initiative said that he was reasonably sure all the delegates present would have materials which could be used as part of a training programme, so training materials themselves were not a problem, more the delivery of the training itself.

The Secretary pointed out that the Committee for the Promulgation of Radio Navigational Warnings (CPRNW) have put in place a training programme aimed at desk level practitioners. The programme is heavily supported by the UK and the US and is offered to the various Regional Hydrographic Commissions. The frequency of the training is determined by the States providing the training resources and is balanced against a priority order determined by the Regional Commissions, and that the IHO perspective is that it is up to the individual nations to support the training rather than it being funded by the IHO.

It was felt that there were similarities with the training programme set up by the DOALOS, with the major difference being that particular programme had the benefit of UN funding being available although there was, as the DOALOS representative pointed out, a measure of support from the host nation for this training. The last training course was held in Namibia, and there may not be any more, so DOALOS may be able to participate in the training given

under the ABLOS banner subject to availability of funds. The IHO has a capacity building fund designed to help fund students attending training courses, but this did not run to assisting lecturers. The Chairman drew the attention of the delegates to the ABLOS ToRs and said that as a group we should be prepared to respond positively to requests from either parent organisations on behalf of their membership and also observed that any training provided was not being set up in competition with any currently provided on a commercial basis.

As the next step, it was suggested that a working group be set up by ABLOS to further investigate the feasibility of such training and report back to the next business meeting. The Chairman called for volunteers to participate in the working group; Mr. Chris Carleton, Mr. John Brown, Mr. Ron Macnab, Cdr. Muhammad Bashir, Mr. Shin Tani and Mr. Steve Shipman all responded willingly to the call; Mr. Chris Carleton also agreed to act as Chairman of the group, which met with unanimous approval. The Secretary agreed to discuss the matter with the IHB and arrange a meeting between the IHB and the working group which owing to various diary commitments would probably take place early in the New Year. The Chairman would then report the outcome of that meeting back to ABLOS.

8. Last lap for the 5th ABLOS Conference
a. ABLOS Fund Update.

The Secretary drew the attention of the delegates to a proposed amendment to the guidelines on the conference fund prepared by him to reflect consequential changes required to reflect the forthcoming internal re-organisation of the IHO. The proposed amendments were accepted including deleting the reference to additional income from royalties as this was felt to be no longer necessary.

The Secretary then circulated an updated account of the conference fund and said that currently there were some 70 paying delegates attending the conference, and that of the 70, 38 had taken advantage of the “early bird” discount – which constituted more than 50% of the delegates – which had been most useful in giving an early indication of the potential response. It was agreed that this practice should continue.

He pointed out that he had identified a sum at risk which arose from the fact that a few delegates had indicated they would pay on arrival and that some were paying by bank transfer which had not yet been received. The amount at risk was potentially some 2,360 Euros. (Post meeting note – the loss was in fact 600Euros.)

There was a rise in forecast expenses due to a change in staff overtime which had been brought about by a combination of unforeseen circumstances. On the plus side, there should be a reduction in paper costs as all documentation will now be on the CDs which will be distributed to the delegates and also posted on the ABLOS website.

His best estimate of the situation at the end of the conference was that there should be an overall increase in the conference fund amounting to some 3,000 Euros.

5th ABLOS Conference

Mr. Chris Carleton gave an update on the running order for the forthcoming conference and said that an extra session had been included prior to the official start of the conference devoted to a presentation by Australia concerning their recent submission to the CLCS.

In commenting on the good cross section of papers which had been received – which should produce welcome discussion – Mr. Chris Carleton emphasised that session chairmen would have to be firm in keeping speakers to time in order to keep the sessions in line with the schedule.

Mr. Steve Shipman outlined the arrangements for questions from the floor with particular regard to the roaming microphones. He said that he would also confirm the numbers for local buses which ran to Casino Square so that those delegates who preferred not to walk could avail themselves of public transport.

Mr. Ron Macnab said that we would circulate a draft questionnaire - similar to the one which was circulated at the last conference – so that feedback from the delegates could be captured, analysed and, where appropriate, incorporated into the planning for the next conference.

b. Preliminary Discussions for the 6th ABLOS Conference. Student participation

A discussion took place with a view to ascertaining if there was merit in encouraging the attendance of postgraduate students at ABLOS possibly by means of reduced fees. Some delegates felt that the fees were already at an academic level and that additionally demand for places was high with this year's conference being well oversubscribed both with papers and delegates. It was felt that students could take advantage of the "early bird" reduction in the booking fee. It was however agreed to canvass the delegates by including this as an item in the proposed conference feedback form being prepared by Mr. Ron Macnab. When the results from this had been collated and analysed, the item could be discussed again at the next Business Meeting.

The Chairman stressed the importance of getting the design of the next conference right and there then followed a discussion round the table resulting in the following topics being advanced as having potential for consideration as conference topics;

Baseline determination

Vertical datums

Update on status of horizontal datums e.g. IRF 80 / WGS 84

Environment / climate change / sea level rise

Annex 2 of the Convention / Sri Lanka clause

Freedom of Navigation

Development of UNCLOS – where is it going?

Update on GLONASS Constellation, differences with GPS and other developments in precise navigation

Maritime resources

Bathymetric data processing

Marine cadastre

Spatial data defined by co-ordinates
 Satellite imagery and baselines
 Anomalous features of the continental margin

9. Status and maintenance of TALOS Manual (S-51)

In giving an update on the status of S-51, the Secretary said that there had been little change from the update he gave at the last Business Meeting with regards to the translation into French and Spanish. He then mentioned that Dr. Sutisna, the Head of BAKOSURTANAL's Boundary Mapping Centre from Indonesia had presented the IHB with an advance copy of the translation of S-51 into Indonesian undertaken by his organisation. Indonesia was congratulated on this significant achievement.

Since the last Business Meeting, no requests have been received either by the Chairman of the Editorial Committee or the IHB for any amendments to be made to the document. Mr. Tani pointed out that reviewing is necessary and called for volunteers to work with the Chairman of the Editorial Committee. Prof. Lars Sjöberg and Mr. Ron Macnab agreed to support for Geodetic and Hydrographic aspects respectively.

It was noted that Dr. Zvonko Gržetić was the current Chairman of the Editorial Committee, however in the light of uncertainty concerning his potential job change and therefore future membership of ABLOS, the post may become vacant. Should this prove to be the case, the matter would be raised as an agenda item at the next Business Meeting.

The chairman asked whether it was possible to have a counter on the IHO web site to record the number of times S-51 was downloaded. The secretary responded that this could be possible with the new IHO web site and that he would investigate further.

10. Reports on member's attendance at LOS related conferences and meetings

The Chairman invited the delegates to give an update on any LOS related conferences or meetings they had attended during the year.

Mr. Ron Macnab delivered a talk at a one-day symposium hosted by the Iceland Law of the Sea Institute in Reykjavik in November 2007. The title of the symposium was "Who owns the North Pole?" He also attended a two-day Symposium at the 33rd International Geological Congress in Oslo in August 2008: "The Ultimate Ocean Mapping Challenge: Implementation of Part VI of UNCLOS." An agenda featuring some two dozen papers from a variety of legal and technical specialists attracted and retained an attendance of 80-90 persons over the full duration of the event. Most if not all papers dealt with aspects of Article 76, including an overview of the outcome of the Australian submission.

Prof. Lars Sjöberg reported that he had opposed a PhD thesis from K Ghazavi entitled "Satellite altimetry derived mean sea surface and its error analysis over the Octas study area". Doctoral Theses at NTNU, 2008: 180, Norwegian University of Technology, Dept of Civil and Transport Engineering, Trondheim, Norway.

Prof. Kusunoki had attended the 31st Meeting of the FIG/IHO/ICA international board on standards of competence for Hydrographic surveyors and nautical cartographers held in Australia in April.

In addition to the 21st and 22nd CLCS meetings and the Meeting of States Parties to UNCLOS, Mr. H P Rajan had attended a seminar organized by Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Canada, in April 2008, to discuss Arctic issues.

Dr. Sunil Bisnath said that whilst he had not attended any conferences which were directly related to LOS he did, however, attend the US Institute of Navigation meeting in Georgia USA at which numerous technical papers were presented on the latest developments in GNSS together with advances in high-precision offshore positioning and navigational techniques.

Cdr. Muhammad Bashir had attended the GEBCO meetings held in Japan in May.

Dr. Zvonko Gržetić had organised a conference in Croatia on the subject of Croatia's maritime boundaries.

Mr. Chris Carleton had attended the ILA conference in Brazil and the meeting of the Major Maritime Powers held in Washington. He had also presented a one day session to the Nippon Foundation students at IFLOS.

Mr. John Brown was a tutor at the IBRU workshop on negotiating International Boundaries held at Durham University in April 2008. He presented a paper and ran a workshop on maritime boundaries at IQPC conference on International Boundary Disputes in Kuala Lumpur in April 2008. Co-presented workshop on maritime boundary delimitation at IFLOS Summer Academy in Hamburg. Attended symposium on Climate Change, Conflicts and Cooperation in the Arctic held at IFLOS in Hamburg in September 2008.

Ms. Asano Usui organised a seminar on the Establishment of the Outer Limits of the Continental Shelf beyond 200 Nautical Miles under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea which was held in Tokyo in February.

Mr. Shin Tani attended the seminar organised by Ms. Usui and presented a paper on ABLOS illustrating some technical aspects on executive summaries of submissions which had been placed before the CLCS. He had attended the GEBCO meetings held in Japan in May and also the Meeting of States Parties to UNCLOS held in New York in June.

Captain Luiz Torres had attended the Brazil-Uruguay Meeting regarding the Harmonization of Outer Limit of the Continental Shelf in the vicinity of the maritime lateral boundary between both countries held in Montevideo in 17 and 18 July.

11. Science / Technical questions (brought forward from 14th BM)

Several of the topics which had been brought forward from the 13th Business Meeting have been incorporated into the various sessions of the 5th Conference, but there was nothing which had been brought forward from the last Business Meeting.

12. New developments relating to CLCS submissions

Mr. Chris Carleton gave a presentation based on the UK's Submission to the CLCS in respect of the area of Ascension Island.

The Chairman having thanked Mr. Chris Carleton for an interesting and informative presentation gave a short talk summarising the status of the submissions which had already been made to the CLCS.

13. Review of requests to ABLOS

The Secretary said that he had received a request for advice from the UK Hydrographic Office on the subject of passage sounding by military vessels within the EEZ of third party states but outside territorial waters, and the releasability of such data to GEBCO for inclusion in their datasets. The problem was that strictly speaking such data was gathered as Military Data Gathering operations (MDG) and as such should not be released to the general public; however it was felt that the data had great value to the scientific community which would be wasted if it were not released.

The Secretary said he had approached the GEBCO guiding committee who had suggested that by asking permission from the coastal state the problem could be solved – a solution which may prove to be a stumbling block due to differing national views on the subject of MDG.

There followed a wide ranging discussion as to where this topic might lie – was it Marine Scientific Research (MSR) or was it covered perhaps by Article 56 of UNCLOS? The consensus was that there was concern amongst ABLOS members over the potential data loss for GEBCO. It was agreed that the Chairman would write a letter to the IHB highlighting the problem and requesting them to raise the issue with GEBCO and other relevant parties.

There were no other issues which had been raised.

14. Any Other Business

Mr. Ron Macnab had circulated a draft version of the questionnaire he proposed to include with the delegate packs at the conference in order to get feedback. He said that whilst we have not had a 100% response in the past, the feedback which we have had, once analysed was extremely useful. He asked session chairs to remind delegates to submit completed forms by the end of the conference. A couple of minor amendments were proposed, after which the form was accepted.

15. Date & venue of next meeting

The next ABLOS business meeting will be held in Indonesia. The incoming Chairman Prof. Chris Rizos will circulate the date and venue as soon as they are confirmed with the hosts.

16. Close of the meeting

In his closing remarks, the Chairman thanked the Japan Hydrographic Association who, on behalf of the Nippon Foundation had generously hosted a most convivial dinner the previous evening. He went on to thank the delegates for attending, and the IHB for the excellent meeting arrangements and for being such attentive hosts then closed the meeting at 12:15.